LABOUR MONTHLY

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THE LEFT AND COMMUNISM

The Editor

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WHY THE STAGNATION IN BRITAIN'S ECONOMY?

Emile Burns

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STORY BEHIND INDONESIA'S COUP

Wilfred Burchett

★

Agriculture, Industry and Socialist Development—Rosenberg
Ergonomics, A Significant Development—Stacey

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Two Shillings

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Notes of the Month

THE LEFT AND COMMUNISM

> **'The effective issue that is raised by the discussion in the last numbers of *Labour Monthly* is simply that of the United Front. I take the view that it is morally obligatory upon the Labour Party to enter the discussion with the Communist Party to see whether an adequate common basis of action can be found. At this phase in the history of capitalism it seems to me irresponsible for a party to take up any attitude which divides the forces and so impairs the strength of the working class movement.'**
>
> HAROLD LASKI, 'Problems of Labour Policy', *Labour Monthly*, March 1936.

December 14, 1965

Is the ice breaking? The French Presidential elections have brought into the forefront the question of socialist-communist and left unity. Irrespective of the final outcome, which will be familiar by the time this is read, it is the first round which aroused universal attention by depriving General de Gaulle of his assumed absolute majority and revealing once again the Popular Front as the most effective challenger to right-wing domination. The significance of this political portent goes far beyond France to all the countries of Western Europe. France led the way with the Popular Front in 1934, barring the streets of Paris to the fascist assault and preparing the Popular Front electoral victory and Government in 1936; followed by the Spanish Popular Front and Government in 1936; the united resistance of the people of London barring its streets to Mosley in the same year, the United Front agreement of the socialist organisations in Britain in 1937, and the Popular Front campaign to defeat the policies of Chamberlain and appeasement. The tide ran high and came near to victory. Had it won, the aggression of fascism would have been halted, and there would have been no second world war. The stakes are higher today. Therefore it is timely that the Congress of the Communist Party in November has raised anew the urgent question of left unity and co-operation to end the domination of right-wing policies of the cold war and subservience to American imperialism, with the accompanying limitations on social advance, and that the discussion has begun.

Some Lessons for Britain

Incidentally, a few pointers from these French presidential elec-

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tions of special interest for Britain may be worth noting. First, if de Gaulle had adopted the British electoral system, he would have been home and dry on the first round, without needing to undergo the indignity of initial failure to win and the consequent necessity to face the Popular Front as his visible challenger on behalf of a united opposition. But even so extreme an authoritarian as de Gaulle did not dare to go so far in his anti-democratic procedures as to imitate the supremely undemocratic British electoral system for his presidential election. Second, if the French Communist Party had adopted the type of argument of certain opponents of the united front in this country, they would have called on the Socialist Party, as the smaller party, to disappear in the interests of unity. Instead, after defeating the disruptive attempts of Deferre to establish a 'non-communist left' to split the left, they gave full support to the candidate backed by the smaller party, the Socialist Party, who put forward a programme providing a basis for co-operation of all on the left. On this basis the united result was made possible which aroused such universal political attention. Third, Communist-Socialist unity benefited both parties, and mobilised a wider mass support than the previous aggregate support of the two parties in separation. Just as in the 1936 elections unity brought a large increase in representation both for the Communist Party (73 seats in place of 10) and for the Socialist Party (148 seats in place of 101), so the 7·6 million votes for Mitterand in the first round of the presidential election in 1965 represented an increase on the total aggregate vote of 6·3 millions for both the Communist Party and the Socialist Party in the general election of 1962.

Worsening International Situation

The urgent problem of left unity is still too often discussed in a narrow spirit in this country, as if it were simply an opportunity for indulging anti-communist spleen, or as if the disparate sections of the still far too small left forces in this country could wrap around themselves separate mantles of disdainful superiority. But the clamorous needs of the menacing realities of the present international situation and of the political situation in Britain have to be faced. The present international situation is worsening. Premier Kosygin said as much to Foreign Secretary Stewart on the occasion of the latter's visit to Moscow in December, and referred especially to Vietnam, the moves to give West Germany access to nuclear arms, and the acquiescent rôle of Britain in these reactionary poli-

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cies. The outcome of these exchanges *The Times* diplomatically described as only a 'modest success'; the more candid *Daily Telegraph* described it as 'agreement to disagree'; the brutal *Express* described it as 'a flop'. It is a measure of this worsening situation that the Soviet Union, after previous cuts in arms expenditure, which had been met by increases from the side of Britain, has now been compelled to increase the allocation for 1966 by 5 per cent, although even so the proportion of the budget devoted to arms expenditure has fallen from 12·9 per cent to 12·8 per cent. It is significant that alongside 13·4 billion roubles devoted to arms, social and cultural expenditure has gone up to 40·3 billions, or treble the arms expenditure; and that the increase of arms expenditure by 600 million roubles has been accompanied by an increase of expenditure on housing by 1,400 millions, or more than double the arms increase; and on education by 1,600 millions, or nearly three times the arms increase; while industrial production is to go up by 6·7 per cent. Unfortunately we can show no such parallel picture in Britain. All the greater is the urgency to mobilise the forces for a change in policy.

From the Thirties to Today

In Vietnam the United States is at this moment conducting a review of further strategic planning which is reported to be contemplating an increase of the American invading forces to 400,000 or to half a million, and the increase of the present cost of £2,000 million a year for a war against a poor nation of thirty million people to £4,000 million in 1966, for a war whose barbarous brutality exceeds even the records of the Axis invading forces in Spain three decades ago. Last month we compared the record of the British Government in confronting the offensive of the racialists in Southern Rhodesia to the Chamberlainite record of appeasement moving into a peculiar type of phoney war. This has now been carried to a further and still more explosive stage when Britain, at the same time as refusing the insistent requests of all the African states for military action to deal with the proclaimed 'rebel' Rhodesian régime, has instead occupied all the airfields in Zambia with R.A.F. planes and troops, not for action against the racialists, but to prevent the arrival of African troops sent against the racialists.* As in the thirties, so today in relation to Southern Rhodesia every other page

*'Rhodesians welcomed the arrival of R.A.F. units in Zambia, principally because they believed this would prevent the arrival of Algerian, Egyptian or possibly Russian units.'—Sir Roy Welensky, *News of the World*, December 12, 1965.

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of the White Paper record of the negotiations reveals the supreme preoccupation of Britain's rulers to be, not with the menace of racialist dictatorship, but with what they see on every side as the menace of communism in alliance with African national mass revolt, so that with comical parallelism at each successive step in their interchange Wilson and Smith ceaselessly accuse one another of playing into the hands of communism. The same spurious world picture of the supposed aggressive menace, reflecting in fact the guilty fears of the dying imperialist social order, today as then leads to successive strategic blunders and fiascoes.

A New World

But the world of today is no longer the world of the thirties. All Africa is awake. The complex difficulties and obstacles which the African states and peoples have to overcome in order to fulfil their united aim of effective aid to their oppressed brothers in the southern regions of the continent should not be allowed to encourage the all too easy sneers of Western journalists who fail to recognise the depth of feeling and determination which is irresistibly pressing forward to fulfilment. The tide has moved since those days. Socialism and national liberation have changed the world balance irreversibly. In January 1966, the new initiative is set for the meeting of the Three Continent Conference at Havana, associating representatives of the peoples from countries comprising the majority of the world's population, and convened by the agreement, overcoming difficulties, of the Preparatory Committee in Cairo, which was composed of representatives from six leading countries from each of the three continents; the Soviet Union, China, India, Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam for Asia; the United Arab Republic, Algeria and Ghana among those from Africa; and Cuba and Mexico from Latin America. Whether this Conference will be successfully held will be tested by the event. But the attempt to hold it is a sign of the times. Certainly there is no lack of problems and differences still to be resolved. The path of the world's advance has never been easy or smooth. But it is impossible for anyone to survey the contrast between the era of the thirties and today and fail to see the road which has been travelled or the direction in which the world is moving. And it is the vital need for Britain, with so many problems inherited from its old vanished rôle of world domination, to be moving forward in unity with the new advancing world, instead of squandering its resources and strength in the vain

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effort to retain the crumbling fragments of its former empire and still continuing and ever enlarging empire exploitation, and becoming in consequence tied and enslaved to the last fortress of the old dying social order, represented by Wall Street and the Pentagon.

Britain In the Rut

Of what avail for Premier Wilson to fly to New York to proclaim undying devotion to the United Nations, when simultaneously Britain treats with open defiance the overwhelming majority resolutions of the United Nations, as for withdrawal from Aden, or on Southern Rhodesia the resolution of November 5, for suspension of the 1961 Constitution, release of the political prisoners and convening of a constitutional conference to establish majority rule, fulfilment of which would have forestalled U.D.I. It is obvious to all that the visit to the United Nations is the rhetorical flourish, while the visit to Washington is for the real business between satellite and overlord. The discredit of the Government's foreign policy, Rhodesian policy, inflated arms programme and 'East of Suez' strategy is becoming recognised on all sides, including by Government supporters. Even the most skilful manipulation of a television 'bedside manner' or 'elder statesman' technique, irresistibly recalling Bismarck's definition of 'a lath of wood painted to look like iron', cannot indefinitely conceal the real fiascoes and incoherence.

Offensive on the People

Most serious and immediately felt by the people are the consequences at home, as the election rosy promises of expansion are replaced by desperate policies of restriction to pay for the foreign imperialist extravagance; Britain falls to near the bottom of the league table of major European industrial countries in the level of social services provisions; and the menace of economic stagnation and deterioration deepens. The unpromising character of the economic perspective for 1966 is examined in the article of Emile Burns in the current issue. Not only in the mining villages or shipyards, but in industry after industry, including the previously booming car industry, the workers are faced with anxiety for the future. Ministerial speeches are increasingly directed against the workers, against strikers, against wage demands (never against soaring profits), and against trade union practices. The Prices and Incomes Board is to be armed with legislative powers, beginning the erosion of the rights of collective bargaining. The offensive against the

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unions is in the open, with the Royal Commission as the sounding board. This dangerous situation, equally abroad and at home, calls imperatively for a far-reaching change in Britain's policy, to end the reactionary imperialist strategy and its ruinous home costs, and to enter on the path of advance which is possible. But such an alternative policy can only be realised if all who recognise the need for such a change combine their efforts to ensure its fulfilment.

Against 'Road Hog' Attitudes

What are the obstacles to such co-operation on the left? It is obvious that the most elementary and absolute obstacle would be if each section of the left were to say: 'I alone am in the right. All the rest of you must conform to what I do. I alone must have right of way'. This might be termed the 'road hog' attitude which blocks traffic. The varied and manifold sections of the left who would support a change of policy along the general lines indicated (as proposed, for purposes of discussion, in the Nine Point Immediate Programme suggested by the Communist Congress) would include many representatives in the Parliamentary Labour Party and local labour parties; the Communist Party and broad readership of the *Daily Worker* or this journal; the combined communist and non-communist left in the trade unions and industry; the many sections of democratic opinion and peace supporters, especially among professional people and young people, not yet part of the organised labour movement, but deeply disillusioned by the reactionary policies of the present Labour Government, eager to support such an alternative programme, and sometimes tempted towards bootless isolationist endeavours to give it political expression ('Radical Alliance', C.N.D. candidates, etc.). In wider political outlook and philosophy there are manifest variations between these sections. But this does not prevent a measure of broad agreement in practice on the immediate changes in Britain's policy which are desirable. If, however, each section were to insist on acceptance of its own distinctive position by the rest as the condition for any co-operation, this would be equivalent to refusing co-operation. If, for example, the communists were to say that the non-communist left in the Labour Party should all leave the Labour Party and join the Communist Party as the best solution; or if the non-communist left in the Labour Party were to demand that the communist left should abandon their belief in the necessity of a party of socialism in the broad labour movement: such proposals would not represent pro-

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posals for co-operation of the left, but a direct negative and an advocacy of the division of the left.

'Let Them Disband'?

An example of the latter attitude was provided by the editorial in the left weekly *Tribune* on December 3, commenting on the proposals of the Communist Congress under the title 'Wind Up the British Communists'. It is to the credit of *Tribune* to have endeavoured to discuss the problem of left co-operation, raised by the Communist Congress, in place of taking refuge in silence, and to have provided space in its pages for further discussion by correspondents. It need hardly be said that the pages of *Labour Monthly* will be similarly available for discussion of the problem by correspondents; a preliminary formulation of our viewpoint was offered in the editorial 'Future of the Left' in our November issue. Discussion of the problem can only be beneficial, as the first step to promote understanding, and to enable prejudices and misunderstandings to be brought into the light of day. The problem of left co-operation is a real one in the localities and in industry, with plenty of living experience of the possibilities and the difficulties, however much those in high places may try either to pretend that it does not exist or to extinguish it with excommunications. The mass campaign against the war in Vietnam, probably the broadest mass campaign since that against Suez compelled the right-wing top leadership of the Labour Party to perform a somersault and replace its initial support of the Tory Government's military measures by opposition, has illustrated equally the possibilities and the difficulties. In this context the contribution offered by *Tribune* can hardly be regarded as fruitful or realist. It is equivalent to suggesting that the problem of co-operation of two participants could be solved if one participant would disappear.

Questionable Assumptions

This outlook is based on a series of questionable assumptions which are treated as infallible axioms to be regarded as obligatory for all on the left. The first assumption is that the fight for a left policy and for socialist aims can only be conducted, and should only be conducted by isolated individual members of the Labour Party, permanently protesting against the dominant right-wing policy and machine, but without common organisation to confront the right-wing machine; without means of formulating a common programme; without organic contact with the trade unions, that is, the mass basis

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of the Labour Party; shackled by disciplinary restrictions from giving full expression to their views; and compelled in their public capacity as endorsed candidates and representatives to uphold and maintain the official right-wing policies which in their personal capacity they deplore. This is an understandable and arguable tactical point of view, genuinely upheld by those who regard this as the best course in the existing conditions of the labour movement in this country; and there should be full respect for their viewpoint from others on the left who have reached different conclusions on the best answer to the common problem. But equally they should respect the viewpoint of those who, precisely from their experience of this struggle of the left within the Labour Party and the trade unions (long before these present critical commentators came on the scene) reached by hard experience the conclusion of the necessity of establishing an organised party of the fight for socialism within the labour movement, not in opposition to the rest of the labour movement, but to co-operate with the rest of the labour movement against the domination of the right-wing machine. As previously noted, the issue between these two main tactical lines on the left is still unresolved, and will only be finally settled by the test of history. But in the meantime this should not prevent the fullest possible co-operation between both sections of the left for the immediate objectives which both sections hold in common. In the words of the editorial quoted, referring to the immediate programme proposed by the Communist Congress: 'The programme for the immediate future outlined contains almost nothing to which a Labour left-winger, inside parliament or without, could take exception'. Then why not co-operate? Why uphold division?

Offspring of the Left

What the advocates of the liquidation of the Communist Party in favour of the supposed preferable alternative of a fight of isolated left individuals within the Labour Party have failed to realise is that the Communist Party is the direct outcome of this fight of the left within the Labour Party, trade unions and old labour and socialist movement. The illusion of these commentators is their blind acceptance (possibly through innocent ignorance of the true facts) of the conventional capitalist and right-wing picture of the Communist Party as a kind of 'Cave of Adullam' of a handful of misguided individuals who, excited by the Russian revolution, founded a little sect on the basis of 'blind loyalty to the Soviet Union', and since

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then have tried to 'infiltrate' the Labour Party as the large mass organisation. A fantastic caricature in every respect. Read the Memoirs of Pollitt or Gallacher. Study the life of Tom Mann. The writer of these Notes used to work in the old Labour Party headquarters in Eccleston Square, before there was a Transport House or a Communist Party or a *Tribune*; contributed no small part of the official Labour Party Press Service; and served on Labour Party headquarters Advisory Committee in the days of Henderson and MacDonald and the Webbs. We did not become Communists because of the Russian revolution; we supported the Russian revolution because we were Communists.

Organising the Left

The left fight reached great heights during those years immediately preceding, in the midst of and succeeding the first world war. But that experience convinced us that the left could not rely on spontaneity alone, on waves of mass upsurge rising and falling in ceaseless succession, while the right-wing fortress remained unshaken and entrenched in continuous domination. Hence we drew the conclusion it was essential to found a consistent organisation of the left fight, a political party of the fight for socialism, not as a separate sect, but uniting the militant fighters in the trade unions, the Labour Party and the mass movement to defeat the right-wing domination and carry forward the whole movement. And it was here that the experience of the first victorious socialist revolution taught the militant workers in this country, as in all the countries of the world, indispensable lessons on the character of such a new party, and the need of such a party for the victory of the socialist revolution.

Heir of the Socialist Movement

The Communist Party arose, not as a new 'infiltration' from outside, but as the direct heir of the original socialist movement in this country, which preceded and helped to found the Labour Party. The Social Democratic Federation, the pioneer of socialist organisation in this country, became the British Socialist Party, which, with the addition of the most active elements of the shop stewards and militant trade unionism, became the Communist Party. The British Socialist Party was already affiliated to the Labour Party, at the same time as it was affiliated to the Communist International and openly expressing its Marxist or communist viewpoint through its directly elected delegates in Labour Party Con-

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ferences; and no question of its rights was raised. The Communist Party from the outset sought affiliation to the Labour Party in the same way, with due acceptance of the constitution of the Labour Party and the same right as other organisations to advocate its viewpoint and make its contribution. But this is precisely what the right-wing leadership feared. Hence their refusal of affiliation, extended eventually to the exclusion of Communists as delegates or as individual members. Their grounds were the same as that expressed by a member of the General Council, A. Conley, a few years later to justify the banning of the Minority Movement: 'if the Council had agreed to this affiliation, within a short time the Minority Movement would become the majority' (*Daily Herald,* September 8, 1926). It was not the Communists, but the right wing who split the movement in order to maintain their domination. Thereby they destroyed the old basis of the Labour Party as an inclusive united organisation of socialist parties and trade unions, and substituted a doctrinaire basis of denial of the class struggle, which leads to ceaseless conflict with socialists and with the organisational basis in the trade unions. *Tribune* is out of date in describing the Labour Party as 'a wide coalition' affording scope for all socialists. That was the old basis before the right-wing disruption and bans. The task now is to find the best means of co-operation, despite the bans, and eventually to overcome the bans. To uphold the policy of bans and division is merely to act as apologist for the right-wing policy of disruption in place of assisting left advance.

Questions of Size

Similarly *Tribune* argues that because the Communist Party is still a small party and the Labour Party is very large, the correct path of unity is for the Communist Party to disband and for its members to merge into the Labour Party. In support of this argument an analogy is offered from Italy: 'if the project for a single working-class party can be put up even within the Italian Communist Party, the largest and most successful in Western Europe, why is it not suggested in the British C.P., a negligible sect in comparison with the Italian giant?' This attempted analogy confuses two distinct problems: the problem of political unity of the entire labour movement to find expression in a single working-class party, and the immediate problem of left co-operation within the broad labour movement, such as can help to prepare the way for the wider aim of political unity of the whole labour move-

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ment. The shortest answer to the complete misconception underlying this argument, and the crushing reply to the rhetorical question posed, is that the British Communist Party does in fact advocate, and has publicly proclaimed in its Congress documents, the aim of a united working-class party, based on socialism and opposition to monopoly capitalism, and not on the 'mixed economy' and co-operation with imperialism. The conditions for the fulfilment of this aim of British Communists to advance to a single united working-class party are not yet within view, so long as right-wing policy and leadership is dominant and able to impose division and repudiation of any class basis or principle of class struggle. Therefore the first elementary step towards this aim is for the existing left forces within the labour movement to co-operate for the common immediate objectives on which they are agreed so as to win the whole labour movement. As soon as this immediate problem is seen in real terms, the question of relative size takes on different proportions. The question then becomes the question of the numbers of active left fighters in the trade union and labour movement.

Two Sections and One Fight

How many in fact are the all too limited numbers of consistently active left fighters in the trade union and labour movement today? The numbers of the mobilised communist left can be estimated in terms of the 34,000 members of the Communist Party and the readership and supporters of the *Daily Worker*. The members of the active non-communist left cannot be so easily estimated save in terms of the readership of *Tribune*, since the left parliamentarians, while exercising an influence on ideas, are not able to count on any mobilised body of support. When we come to these real practical measures of strength in the battle, in which alike the communist left and the non-communist left are in reality fighting alongside one another for common aims, and often achieving a high degree of co-operation, despite bans, especially on the lower levels and in the unions, every one with living experience of the actual struggle in the unions and industry, in the localities and in mass campaigning, is aware that the communist left represents a by no means negligible section of the total forces of the left. It we turn from this to the very large figures of millions of potential left supporters who can be won in the trade union and labour movement for left policies on this or that issue, as shown in the votes ranging from two to three millions in recent Trades Union Congresses and

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Labour Party Conferences, then it is a familiar fact that the main volume of these votes has been achieved on the basis of the preceding fight within the unions, with communist participation, and that in these battles the communist trade unionists are usually more strongly placed to exercise their influence than the parliamentarians. All this is not to disparage the weight of any section of the left, or to counter the relative weight of one section against another. All that it shows is that the co-operation of all sections of the left is likely to produce the most effective results for the benefit of the whole labour movement. And what applies within the labour movement applies equally in the general political situation in Britain, in which a united labour movement with a left policy should be able to mobilise the widest sections of the people.

Political Test

The test of value of a given political organisation is not only size, although this is important, but also its political role and impact. Here there can be no question of the lesson of the record. It is true that all of us on the left have no reason to be happy over the record of these past decades in Britain, with continued still unbroken right-wing domination of the labour movement, monopoly capitalism entrenched, official Labour policy sliding to the right, and Britain a cold war satellite of American imperialism. But it is also true that through the whole chequered record all that is remembered and celebrated with pride and honour today by the entire labour movement, during these four and a half decades of the foundation and existence of the Communist Party, such as the *Jolly George* which prepared the way for the Councils of Action, or Red Friday and the militant industrial upsurge which prepared the heroic class solidarity of the General Strike; the Unemployed Hunger Marches (banned at the time by the T.U.C. and Labour Party until the support of the movement compelled a change); the barring of the road to Mosley; the fight for Spanish democracy and the role of the International Brigade; the at first lone stand against Munich; the campaign for the Second Front; the smashing of the wage-freeze after the war; or the at first almost isolated battle against the American domination of Britain and nuclear warfare now taken up on a widely extended front, but still to be won: all these have time and again sprung—not in terms of some sectional claim, but by the demonstrable facts and dates of the record—from the initiative of the Communists and Communist Party. When the *Daily Herald* was

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sold out to the millionaires, it was the initiative of the Communist Party which made possible the foundation and maintenance for thirty-five years now, by the infinite devotion and sacrifice of its members and supporters, of the only independent newspaper of the working class. And indeed it is appropriate to recall in the present context that it was the initiative of the party which helped to inspire the foundation of *Tribune,* as previously of the *Sunday Worker,* and still further back, of this journal, all as successive voices of the left, supported by the party. And on the other side of the medal, all that is today remembered with shame and anger by the entire labour movement: the betrayal of the General Strike; the open transition of the principal Labour leaders to Toryism; the support of the ban on arms to Spanish democracy; the godspeed to Munich; or the sell-out of Britain to the United States: all these stemmed from those most prominent in denouncing Communism. Therefore representatives of the left should beware of joining the anti-communist chorus.

Instability of Individuals

There is a further reason why the existence of an organised detachment of the fight for socialism and left policies, closely linked in practice with the working-class organisations, but never allowing itself to be gagged by the threats of Transport House, is of positive value to all on the left in the difficult conditions of their fight within the Labour Party. One of the difficulties of that fight of the left within the Labour Party is that they are in practice debarred from having any organisation to formulate their viewpoint and conduct their fight. The record is littered with the epitaphs of such attempts from the Socialist League to Keep Left to Victory for Socialism, not to mention the successive fates of the Labour League of Youth, the Young Socialists, and now the threat hanging over the head of the Labour Party Young Socialists. Hence the left within the Labour Party is compelled to depend on individual politicians for the voicing and organisation of their fight. This is a very unstable basis. These individual politicians may have all the virtues in the world and the highest certificates of character at a given moment. But individuals are unpredictable; they are answerable to no one but themselves; they may presently move anywhere. The history of the Labour Party is littered with such fallen idols of the left. Ramsay MacDonald was triumphantly backed by the 'Red Clydesiders' as the Hero of the Left after the first world war to oust the right-wing Clynes. Mosley was a Hero

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of the Left till he hived off to found his fascist organisation. Aneurin Bevan was the Idol of the Left after his resignation from the Third Labour Government till the unhappy day of his *volte-face* to unity with Gaitskell over the H-bomb struck a dagger through the hearts of his admirers. Harold Wilson, trailing still a slight aura of 'Bevanism', was triumphantly elected by the Left as their champion against the right-wing candidate; although the outcome is causing them less satisfaction.

Individuals and Organisation

To attempt to build the left solely on individual leaders is to build on sand. This is not to say that the Communist Party is infallible or perfect and has not made plenty of mistakes. But there is a difference. When MacDonald went over to head a Tory Cabinet that was not a 'mistake'. When Mosley set up his Union of Fascists that was not a 'mistake'. There is after all something to be said for the usefulness of a collective democratic working-class organisation devoted to the aim of socialism, not as a pious formula to be ignored, but based on socialist theory, and with policy democratically determined by the delegates elected by the membership. This does not imply that the form of the Communist Party should be the only form of left activity, or that all those advocating left policies in the Labour Party should abandon their positions to join the Communist Party. Communists may certainly hold the view that the most effective way to fight for the aims of socialism and influence the broad labour movement is as an organised member of their party. But they would no more dream of endeavouring to impose such a demand on their fellow left fighters in the Labour Party than it would be reasonable for the latter to demand of the Communists to dissolve their organisation in order to seek admittance to the Labour Party. What is important at the present stage is for all sections of the left to recognise the value of the various contributions that each section can make, and to recognise that co-operation in pursuit of common immediate objectives is more useful than division which only benefits the right wing.

First Steps

Such co-operation requires some measure of agreement on common immediate objectives. Hence the value of discussion of a common immediate programme. Such co-operation would also require a serious attempt to overcome the present unnecessary

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mechanical obstacles to association. The time may not yet be ripe to review all the questions of future relations, although these wider questions may come to the forefront in proportion as co-operation develops. But it should be possible already to get rid of some of the most elementary bans on common working, such as joint association in mass campaigning, tenants' committees, taking up of local issues, and the like (in practice such co-operation does go forward, but always with a certain atmosphere of overhanging threats). Similarly in those unions where bans are still maintained, and to ensure full democratic rights of election of delegates by unions to all labour conferences. Left representatives in the Labour Party widely declare in private their detestation of the whole crippling system of bans and proscriptions. Why not in public? Is it not time to make it a recognised plank of the public common platform of the left to end the whole McCarthyite system of bans and proscriptions which hamstrings healthy democratic development in the labour movement? Such a step forward would not only be a democratic gain, but would strengthen the common fight of all on the left for those progressive changes in policy which are so urgent today for the future of the labour movement and for the whole future of British politics.

R.P.D.

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WHY THE STAGNATION IN BRITAIN'S ECONOMY?

Emile Burns

ON the threshold of the New Year, the latest statistics and forecasts show that the rise in Britain's gross national product in 1965 has not fulfilled the expectations of Labour's National Plan. It has risen by about 2 per cent over 1964, compared with 3·8 per cent annual growth required by the Plan; and the trend is much the same—that is, the estimates for 1966 show a similar rise of about 2 per cent, or roughly half the planned figure.

The last of a series of articles on 'The Industrial Pulse of Britain' (*The Times*, October 23, 1965) was headed 'Long-Forecast Recession Still Being Held at Bay'—hardly an inspiring analysis of the situation. It recorded 'soft spots in cars, steel, refrigerators and other consumer trades', but comforted itself with the thought 'Yet it is hard to detect any marked fall in activity in general'.

The whole situation exposes once again the downright stupidity of the so-called incomes policy, with its attempted holding down of wages to the level of the increase in the national income. The 'soft spots', with the actual fall in production of cars, steel and consumer durables, are in no way due to high wages, or to any action or inaction of the workers. It is not they who decide to cut down production, and therefore cut down the gross national product. The responsibility is that of the employers and the government: the employers because they cannot find a market at the prices they impose; the government because its restrictive measures directly check production as in the postponement of public capital investment, or narrow the market as in its indirect taxation and its efforts to hold back wage increases.

One of the most comic aspects of the recent cold spell was the Government's decision to instruct the nationalised electricity and gas industries to stop advertising their wares in order to check demands for more efficient heating. (The oil concerns refused to follow suit.) It may or may not have had any effect: but it is significant of the outlook, which is to restrict demand rather than produce more to meet people's needs.

The whole policy of restricting demand is quite incompatible with the Government's other policy of a planned growth of production. But because neither policy is being successful, the blame in both

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cases is being put by Government propaganda on the workers: they demand higher wages, and they do not increase productivity. The employers' propaganda is on the same lines, plus charges that the workers waste their money or they would be able to live comfortably on present wages. *The Times* (October 18, 1965) reports: 'Traders concentrating on Liverpool complain that while there is plenty of money about people prefer to spend it in the betting shops and Bingo halls'.

As for productivity, here again the workers are not to blame for the fact that the annual rise in production per worker in Britain lags behind the level in other capitalist countries, especially the United States. Where capital investments—the essential condition for technical advance and therefore for great increases in production per worker—have been made in Britain, productivity has risen. This is true, for example, of the motor vehicle industry and of agriculture: in the latter, consistent mechanisation has raised production per worker at an average annual rate of 6 per cent between 1960 and 1964.

As the *Financial Times* of November 11, 1965, notes:

> One over-riding factor behind Britain's inability to keep pace with the U.S. has been the failure of British industry to match the massive investments by American business in fixed plant and equipment.

And this is not because British capitalists have not made the profits necessary for such investments, but because the general trend has been to export these profits as capital to invest abroad, especially in the underdeveloped countries, where wages are low and profits are higher than in Britain.

Today these policies are coming home to roost, not only in limiting the competitive possibilities of British exports, but in further worsening the balance of payments position through the large and growing imports, especially from the United States, of up-to-date machinery and equipment. The Government's alleged aim in restricting demand at home is to encourage exports. Its alleged aim in encouraging exports is to right the balance of payments and get a credit surplus on foreign loans before 1970. (The total foreign loans are over four times that figure, but £900 millions are due to be repaid before 1970.)

It is true that exports have been rising slowly, and imports falling. But estimates of the further development of exports are not optimistic, especially in view of the fact that most of the primary producing countries already have heavy adverse balance of payments

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problems and must inevitably restrict their foreign purchases. And the fall in imports—due largely to the 15 per cent import surcharge and the decline in some sections of British industry—cannot continue if British production is to be increased. And how can the import restriction policy be reconciled with the purchase of aircraft and equipment from the United States, 'running to around $2,000 million or even more' (*Financial Times*, November 2, 1965)?

The fact is that restriction and expansion are not the only contradictory policies that the Labour Government is following. The attempt to check imports is also incompatible with the expansion plans for British industry. The attempts to encourage exports are incompatible with restricting production at home, because of the higher costs involved in a lower rate of production, and because the latter is also a check on new investment needed to raise production.

But these contradictory policies—which inevitably lead to the virtual stagnation of Britain's economy—are equally inevitably the product of the major contradiction: British imperialism's striving to maintain and extend its world position, and at the same time to bring British industry up to the level of its competitors in a period of highly developed monopoly and rapidly advancing technique, alongside the steady advance of the socialist countries and of the national liberation forces.

The fact that 'the winds of change' have made any solution of this major contradiction impossible is ultimately responsible for the arms programme, the constantly recurring balance of payments problem, the feverish attempts to hold on to Southern Arabia and Malaysia and the whole 'East of Suez policy', the support of United States policy in Vietnam and the general subservience to the dictation of American finance, besides the weakness in relation to the W. German revanchism and the renewed efforts to find shelter in the European Common Market.

And in Britain itself, the same insoluble contradiction is responsible for the desperate efforts to impose the 'incomes policy', the threats to the trade unions, the restrictions on the expansion of the social services, and on the other hand the financial incentives to modernise industry, the talk of 'dynamic' government measures to improve things, and the dependence on the 'partnership' with the monopolies.

In these circumstances the resistance to particular aspects of government policy needs to be united in a single central movement

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of opposition to the basic policies of British monopoly capital, and the labour and progressive movement won for an understanding that none of the problems facing the British people can be solved without a fundamental change in the basic policy which both Tory and Labour Governments have been pursuing.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

THE 'PERMANENT' GOVERNMENT

'The Government of this country', declared the Judge in his summing up, 'is not Conservative or Labour; it is not Mr. Ramsay MacDonald or Mr. Baldwin of whom we are thinking when we speak of the Government of this country. We speak of government by "the King in Parliament", *that permanent Government which is going on the whole time*' . . . The Judge could not have put the point more precisely. The real Government in Capitalist Democracy is not Mr. Baldwin or Mr. MacDonald—that is a matter of complete indifference, and none would turn a hair at their overthrow: the real Government is 'that permanent Government which is going on the whole time'; and the crime of sedition, at which all the boasted 'free speech', reasonable argument, discussion and the rest of it comes to an end and is suddenly replaced by the gaoler's turnkey and the end of a gun, is the crime of daring to question that 'permanent government', of daring to look past the puppet Prime Ministers on whose alternative virtues all orthodox, dutiful, permitted 'free' political agitation should be centred, and instead of fixing on and challenging that 'permanent Government' which is the real government in Capitalist Democracy . . . What is that mysterious 'permanent Government'? The judge in tones of high mystery endeavoured to explain it in the impressive and adoring phrase 'what we speak of as Government by "the King in Parliament" ', much as if he was saying, 'Government by the Blessed Virgin' or 'Government by the Holy Trinity'. But the reality is not so mysterious or ineffable, if we choose to examine it. The real 'permanent Government' in Capitalist Democracy is not difficult to discover, if its actual plain working in the whole social and political system, in every corner of the land, in every act of the whole executive, judicial, bureaucratic and military machine, is examined. The 'permanent government which is going on all the time' in Capitalist Democracy is—Capitalism.

(From the Notes of the Month, January, 1926)

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THE MOTOR INDUSTRY INQUIRY

Peter Nicholas*

(This survey, by a convener, of the problems of trade unionism and industrial relations in the motor industry, which were referred to the Scamp Committee by the Government, was written before the report was published. The publication of this report makes all the more important this candid survey of the problems from the point of view of the workers.—Ed., L.M.)

IN September 1965, Mr. Wilson summoned to Downing Street the national trade union leaders with membership in the motor industry. They were told that the 'unofficial strikes' taking place in the industry must be ended, and that the unions must take steps to deal with the question themselves, or the Government would have to intervene, presumably by legislation.

Subsequently a special committee was set up and Mr. Jack Scamp was appointed as its 'independent' chairman. He was specifically charged with conducting investigations into the causes of the unofficial strikes and a report was to be made within three months. Mr. Scamp and his committee have already, at the request of the company, investigated the Rover factory at Solihull and their report is awaited.

Will this ex-personnel manager of the General Electric Corporation be able to solve the problems of the motor industry? What is the cause of the majority of the disputes?

Readers will of course dispense straight away with the capitalist anti-trade union press argument, that invariably it is the all-powerful shop steward, who without explaining to his members what it is all about, calls them out on strike or instructs them to go slow. Motor workers are a hard-working, intelligent and militant group of trade unionists, not to be likened to sheep, who certainly before taking action of any kind will require to know in full detail what it is all about. But, once being satisfied that a grievance exists, no one knows better how to get a speedy and satisfactory settlement.

The average motor car is made up of several thousand different parts, which each have to have a considerable number of operations performed upon them before the final article rolls off the assembly line. All of these parts are subject to modification from time to

*Mr. Nicholas is a Convener at a Rover factory.

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time in order to comply with changes in design and model changes. This often involves new methods of production, which involve changes in the piecework value, and it is very often these changes which are used to attempt to undermine wage levels and to promote speed up unless the utmost vigilance is exercised.

Hundreds of these problems are solved every day in the industry without resort to any action and consequently without reaching the headlines. But every now and then the ratefixer 'tries it on', digs in his heels and a showdown takes place when the workers dig in their heels. Arbitrary dismissals of workers, particularly those who are militant is another reason for an immediate 'downer' until he is re-instated.

Experience has taught engineering workers that little comfort is to be gleaned from the procedure when a militant trade unionist is victimised, and managements' steadfast refusal to retain such workers on the payroll whilst the matter is dealt with through the procedure, indicates the correctness of the policy of immediate action to protect the militant workers.

Solidarity amongst motor workers is traditional and managements, who very often unnecessarily lay off workers when a sectional dispute occurs, do so in an attempt to divide the workers. But most motor workers know that the worker with a dispute on his hands today who loses his battle, will himself be the victim of the same attack the next day or week. Hence the 'blacking of work' when a dispute occurs is the rule in many factories, very often with financial support for workers in dispute.

The settlement of these day-to-day problems cannot be solved by anyone other than the people on the spot—the workers and the shop stewards in negotiation with the management representative. These kind of problems are an every-day occurrence, which would keep a thousand Scamps fully occupied twenty-four hours a day.

What is needed is a much greater power to resolve these questions at factory level. Many of the leading conveners and shop stewards are responsible for settling more disputes in their factory than some full time trade union officials have to deal with in some of the smaller districts. It is the work of these conveners and shop stewards, with the support of their members, which has made the unions strong, and which has brought wage levels and working conditions to compare so favourably with the national minimum laid down in agreements. It is by their leadership that the level of speed up and machine manning has been controlled. It is they

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who have lead the fight against the bosses' pre-war policy of indiscriminate hiring and firing, and excessive overtime in the industry.

Well might the Ministry of Labour, in its memo to the Royal Commission on the Trade Unions, and the employers say 'it would not be good for industrial relations to put a large number of people in jail'. (The idea had obviously been seriously examined.) Of course, even the Ministry of Labour recognises that it is just these people who every day create the wealth of the country and that they would not be contributing to that cause within the confines of Winson Green, Walton or Wormwood Scrubs.

The shop stewards and factory negotiations have come to stay and their place must be guarded and strengthened outside the factory by the support of the entire trade union and labour movement. More strength must be given to the fight to secure a greater share of the spoils of the motor industry. Never were profits and dividends higher. The need for an even shorter working week, for longer holidays and for measures to prevent harmful speed up are imperative. Men must not be too old at 45 to work for or enter this industry.

The 'patriots' who scream every time the motor worker takes action to defend his position would be well advised to look elsewhere to discover the source of Britain's economic ills, and to examine whether their particular contribution has been as outstanding since the end of the war as that of the motor workers, with particular regard to the export market.

It is not the British motor worker who is responsible for the stop-go policy that has placed a brake on vehicle production in this country. It is not they who support an incomes policy which curtails the purchasing power of the workers, and lessens his ability to buy back the goods he produces. Motor workers have no responsibility for the uneconomic working of the industry, which could be greatly rationalised under public ownership with its consequent planned production leading to cheaper cars.

No headlines have been in the capitalist Press recently castigating the Government and its predecessors for lost production arising from a shortage of fuel in the first two days of winter in mid-November. There has been no word of reprimand for these people over the loss of at least two days' wages incurred by thousands of Midland workers as a consequence of their inefficiency. The British workers' record of strikes is lower in the league than many in the

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Western world. Many more productive hours are lost as a consequence of accidents and sickness than were ever lost by strikes.

These attempts to slander the British motor workers' struggle to defend and improve his conditions will be resisted at all cost. No shackles will limit his fight to preserve his freedom to negotiate at shop level, to defend the militant workers and shop stewards, and to ensure that he gets an ever-increasing share of the vast profits that accrue from his labours by hand and brain.

To our Readers
and many Friends
NEW YEAR
GREETINGS
from the
Editor and Staff of
LABOUR MONTHLY

The General Executive Council and Members of the AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF BOILERMAKERS, SHIPWRIGHTS, BLACKSMITHS AND STRUCTURAL WORKERS give Fraternal Good Wishes and a New Year Greeting to all workers.
As year succeeds year may the bonds of peace and friendship which bind all who labour, be drawn ever closer.
D. McGARVEY,
President

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THE LABOUR P

THE General Election of January 12 to February 7 1906, was the grand slam of the century. The Tory seats in the House of Commons, which had numbered 402 at the previous election, went down to 157 while the Liberal gains rose correspondingly. Within the Liberal Party it was a triumph too for the Lib-Labs, whose numbers rose to over a score including the 16 members from the Miners' Unions. It was also a triumph for the Labour Representation Committee, which on the strength of having gained 29 seats decided to call itself the Labour Party, but without as yet any socialist programme or indeed any worked out programme at all.

These gains were owed for the most part to a signed secret treaty between Ramsay MacDonald (along with Keir Hardie) and the Chief Liberal Whip, Herbert Gladstone, by which the Liberal leaders left the Labour Representation Committee a free field in some 30 constituencies. This clandestine arrangement (which expressly excluded class-conscious candidates from the Social Democratic Federation) was kept by MacDonald from the knowledge of his own Committee, whose members continued publicly to claim an independence from the Liberal Party that was hardly warranted.

This secret treaty (only widely known in these last seven years) provides some explanation of the puzzling attitude of MacDonald towards the Liberal Government from 1905 to 1915. At that same time, John Burns, who had long been known as a socialist, accepted a post in the Liberal Cabinet, and was sharply criticised for it. MacDonald, with more far-reaching ambitions, did not take up a post in a capitalist cabinet until he could appear as its nominal head: and that was 25 years later in 1931.

R.P.A.

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RTY EMERGES

('The Coming of Labour from the Workshop to St. Stephens', from *Illustrated London News*, January 27, 1906)

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THE STORY BEHIND INDONESIA'S COUP

Wilfred G. Burchett

(This despatch, which was written in October during the first weeks after the September 30 clash, and originally published in the National Guardian *of November 13, 1965, is of value for giving the impressions of this experienced correspondent on the still obscure immediate events leading to the present grave situation, with the full-scale Army counter-revolutionary offensive, exclusion of the Communist deputies from parliament, moves to ban the Communist Party, and continuing struggle in Central Java.—Ed., LM.)*

IN April of this year, in the modest one-storey building that serves as headquarters of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), I had a conversation with Secretary-General D. K. Aidit and Second Deputy Chairman Njoto. Parts of that conversation have a sharp relevance to the attempted coup on October 1 and the events which followed.

I asked: 'Is it true, as the Western Press writes, that at the head of the armed forces there are extremely reactionary, anti-Communist and pro-American elements?' 'Yes', replied Aidit, 'among the leadership at the very top there are such elements.' 'Is there not a danger that these elements will try to stage a military coup?' 'There is such a danger. We are aware of it. So is President Sukarno. The president knows that the only threat to his leadership comes from the extreme right and that the CIA is extremely active.' 'Could such a coup succeed?' 'It could have some initial successes but we do not believe it could succeed in the long run.' 'Why?' 'Within the armed forces there are profoundly progressive elements, not only among the rank and file but right up to unit commanders in all four services—we consider the police also as a branch of the armed forces together with the army, navy and air force. Also, our party is well organised throughout the country; PKI members and sympathisers organised in the trade unions, peasants' associations, youth and women's organisations and others make an organised force of over 20 millions. . . .'

'Can an armed clash be avoided?' 'We hope it can, we believe it can, we work to that end. If it depended on us, it would be avoided. But it does not depend on us. . . . Our policy is to be vigilant, to strengthen our own organisations and to do everything to reinforce unity within the country's leadership, headed by President Sukarno. . . .'

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I have thought a good deal about the conversation since and wondered to what extent the PKI was taken by surprise and caught off balance. A few days ago I met an Indonesian whom I know as having close contact with the PKI leadership and who escaped the army dragnet in Jakarta. He is temporarily out of the country. According to him, the PKI leadership learned in mid-August that right-wing army leaders planned a coup to take place between October 5 and 12. A 'general's council' had been formed. 'Trusted' army units were to be concentrated in the capital on October 5, the 20th anniversary of the founding of the army, and 'several millions' of Muslims, grouped around the outlawed, right-wing Darul-Islam organisation, were to flood into Jakarta on the pretext of a Muslim holiday, to give the 'mass support' for a general massacre of Communists, left-wing nationalists and their supporters.

Documentary evidence of these plans and CIA involvement fell into PKI hands, according to my informant, and this was the principal reason for the sacking of PKI offices and the homes of Aidit, Njoto and Lukman (first deputy chairman). It was hoped these incriminating documents would be discovered—or at least destroyed in the burning and pillage. But, my informant said, they are in a safe place and will be produced at 'an appropriate moment'.

The PKI central committee met the last week of August and took secret decisions presumably related to organisational questions in case the 'generals' coup' could not be averted. Sukarno reportedly was informed of what was impending but because of his ill health he either did not take the warnings seriously or failed to act with his customary energy, or—as has been the case since—was no longer able to impose his will on General Nasution and other right-wing generals.

In late September, Colonel Untung, head of the presidential guard, learned of the planned coup from independent sources. He approached leaders of the PKI, among others, revealing what they had known for some time, and urged joint action to thwart the coup. The PKI leaders reportedly refused on the ground that such action would be 'premature' and that as long as Sukarno remained at the helm everything possible should be done to maintain unity, while all patriotic elements within the armed forces should remain vigilant to deal with any coup from above.

The rest is history. Untung struck on September 30, hoping to eliminate all the members of the 'generals' council', from Nasution down. Apparently he believed that although the PKI was opposed

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to such action, it would be bound to support him once the deed was done. In this, he miscalculated. When Untung started handing out arms to the people, Young Communist League members grabbed their share—if only to prevent their falling into the hands of their potential enemies. But neither the PKI or the YCL or any affiliated bodies took part in any phase of Untung's action. And in acting as he did, he provided a sort of 'Reichstag Fire' pretext for a hunting down of all progressives and a ban on their organisations.

According to my informant, CIA agents played an active part all the way through, circulating forged documents, printing forged bulletins and even newspapers, spending considerable money, providing everything from slogans for the Muslim lynch mobs to addresses of those to be arrested and killed.

It was certainly with this in mind that Sukarno, in his opening address at the Jakarta Conference against foreign military bases on October 17, warned against the activities of the CIA and other U.S. agencies: 'They are putting their stooges . . . tools, men and women who are defending imperialism . . . even in my country. And they are bringing great calamity to Indonesia. . . .'

As for the present situation, my informant said that the PKI is rapidly being organised all over the country for armed resistance, in case this becomes inevitable, but the present policy is to support to the utmost Sukarno's efforts to achieve a political solution and to restore unity. As long as there is a chance of his succeeding, the PKI will not move. But it is also taking no chances. Despite the bans and sacking of premises, the PKI, from its basic cells to the top leadership, remains intact. No party leaders at any level 'presented themselves to the army or police' as the military junta demanded in the decrees banning the PKI in area after area. Apart from Jakarta, packed with the most reactionary troops and right-wing Muslim bands, where resistance would have brought about a bloodbath, attacks on Communist premises in most other parts of the country have successfully been resisted by mass action.

Sukarno understands well that the alternatives are to restore unity and curb the generals or to face a long-drawn-out civil war. He is exerting every effort to restore unity.

In the event of wide armed struggle, the loyalty of many key units within the armed forces to the 'generals' council' would be questionable. It is a matter of common knowledge that the PKI has its bases also within the armed forces at all levels.

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President Sukarno still has great prestige, and for Nasution or any other right-wing generals to come out openly against him would mean to close the ranks between the Nationalists and the PKI. The generals have no real mass support, despite the stage-managed demonstrations in Jakarta. The fact that after burning the PKI premises the rioters marched to the U.S. Embassy shouting 'Long Live the USA' opened the eyes of the Jakarta population as to who were the real 'counter-revolutionaries'. (Probably the rioters went even too far for the CIA, on that occasion.)

The noise and bluster of the generals and their strong arm mobs in Jakarta provide only a curtain-raiser for what may well prove to be the greatest drama in Indonesian history.

AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT

W. Rosenberg*

WHEN considering the place of agriculture in development, two factors have to be taken into account: there is the basic economic fact of displacement of labour from the land with the growing mechanisation of farming—this applies to capitalist and socialist economies alike;† secondly, how is a country, which has achieved full control of its means of production through a socialist revolution, to deal with these basic economic laws?

Let me deal with the two points one by one. It may be worth while to start by presenting the facts in a table:

Table 1

Total Labour Force and Farm Labour Force Trends in Selected Countries

N.Z.		*Australia*		*U.K.*		*Canada*		*U.S.A.*	
1949	*1961*	*1947*	*1961*	*1949*	*1964*	*1949*	*1964*	*1948*	*1963*
18·4	12·4	15·6	10·9	5·5	3·4	19·5	8·5	12·7	6·5
(Farm Labour as % of total)									
13·4		39·1		420		386		3,014	
(Farm Labour Displaced (in thousands))									

*Mr. Rosenberg is a Reader in Economics, Canterbury University, New Zealand.

†The present writer has argued this case for New Zealand in a recent book: *The Effect of Import Controls and Industrialisation on New Zealand:* N.Z. Monthly Review Society, Christchurch, N.Z., 1965.

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While the farm labour force thus decreased absolutely and relatively, the total labour force increased in the countries dealt with in Table 1 as follows:

Table 2

Increase in Total Labour Force in Selected Countries (15 years)

New Zealand	237,000
Australia	1,029,000
U.K.	1,732,000
Canada	1,791,000
U.S.A.	12,800,000

(Source of Tables 1 and 2, *N.Z. Labour and Employment Gazette*, August 1964, p. 18.)

The reasons for displacement of labour from farming occupations are of general application under capitalism and socialism because they are the outcome of a tendency which is connected with the so-called Law of Diminishing Returns to Land. This 'law' has frequently been wrongly interpreted as a statement that subsistence production from the land must necessarily fall short of the requirements of a growing population. In fact, however, it merely states three principles which have proved to be correct by experience—but which are subject to conscious control by man:

1. That—unless counteracted by the application of farming techniques—the same piece of land cannot be cultivated ever more intensively. Increasing cultivation of the same piece of land will lead to soil exhaustion, erosion and diminishing returns.

2. That—unless counteracted by the development of transport, amelioration measures of a large kind and the application of farming techniques—expansion of farm areas will meet with less and less suitable land for cultivation.

3. That the application of an increasing number of workers to the same piece of land will not increase output in the proportion of the increase of the labour force. In fact the point can be reached when an additional worker on an already 'overpopulated' piece of farm land reduces the output of that farm by the reduced subsistence available to all cultivators on that unit, rather than increases it.

It is important to recognise that principles (1) and (2) apply only to the extent that modern techniques are not applied to farming. If they are not applied, as is the case in the so-called 'under-developed' countries, the result will be an appearance of agricultural overpopulation. Cultivators will crowd on the land; the land will not yield growing returns; there will be a fragmentation of land as more and more cultivators try to work a fairly stable area of land; and soil exhaustion, erosion, flooding and dust storms will contribute

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to the process explained in terms of Malthusian over-population theories by the growing chorus of bourgeois 'liberal' pessimists. The result of these theories is a tendency towards despair on the one hand, and genocide on the other.*

In fact, the third principle can be used to overcome the other two. Subsistence can increase at a very much faster rate than population, if labour is used to create the fertiliser, the roads, the railways, the heavy farm equipment, the chemicals and all the other things which are required to obtain increasing returns from a given piece of land and to expand the area of cultivation into the huge areas of uncultivated land so widely available in most underdeveloped countries.

The problem of development then is the removal of surplus farm labour into towns and industries, so that the means of production can be created which will stem the tendency towards diminishing returns to land in a previously stagnant society. Thus I must differ from Professor Kuczynski when he said, in his interesting article 'Modern Agriculture Under Socialism' in *Labour Monthly*, February, 1965, that we are able to conceive of 'an agricultural way to industrialisation as a very important and advantageous method for many newly liberated countries' (p. 77).

The question is not whether to industrialise or not: industrialisation is essential in order to give productive employment to the surplus population on the land. Only by removing this population from the land can the output per capita of those who remain be increased radically. Industrialisation is also essential to give the means of production to those who remain on the land. The question is how the process of transforming traditional agriculture into modern machine and knowledge-using farming can best be financed.

In a society where the means of production have been removed from the control of private owners who consider short-term profitability their main objective; and where the resistance of the working classes to technical improvement and economic and social change has been overcome by the conviction of the most advanced workers and the masses that now they are working for the betterment of themselves and society; in such a society planning for industrialisation becomes possible.

Planning for industrialisation consists of the use of a surplus of subsistence goods made available from the agricultural sector for

*'A hydrogen bomb war is the only answer to the problem of the growing world population, a symposium of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was told yesterday at Cardiff.' (Cable published in the Christchurch/N.Z. 'Press' dateline, September 8, 1960.)

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the feeding, clothing and housing of a growing labour force in industry. In providing the industrial equipment for this new non-agricultural labour force two extreme ways are possible—but all sorts of compromises between these extremes exist. The one extreme is the finance of the new industry by establishing all the resources for it within the country. This means, above all, the primary development of heavy industries, the growth of machine building industries and the establishment of new centres of population around the new industrial complexes which are moved to exploit all the natural resources of the country. This type of development is appropriate for a large self-sufficient country like the Soviet Union and China. The flow of technical products for improving the productivity of agriculture is slowed down in this case by the need to concentrate first on the construction of heavy industries which—after some further stages of production only—will be able to supply the necessary fertiliser, tractors, building materials, chemicals and so on to the country-side.

The agricultural problem in such a type of development takes two forms: (1) the removal of as high a surplus as possible of subsistence goods from the country to feed industrial workers (collectivisation, taxation, price 'scissors' and so on are important factors here); and (2) the education of the rural population to make the best use of their own labour power (use of cadres, rural education, pooling of forces in communes and ideological fervour are factors here). In the case of the early history of the Soviet Union the first aspect of obtaining finance for industrialisation was very prominent. China is putting greater emphasis on the second aspect, having learned from some of the mistakes of the Soviet Union, and being possibly more reliant on the peasantry even than the Soviet Union was in her early stages of industrialisation.

The other extreme is the finance of new industries by exporting agricultural raw materials and by obtaining the machines and raw materials required for industrialisation through the agency of foreign trade. It is, however, important to remember that this way of industrialisation does not make export industries or primary production the objective of development. Primary production (like sugar in Cuba) is maintained and expanded, so as to obtain the foreign exchange to buy industrial equipment from more developed countries and to establish an industry in this fashion. For it is only industry that can absorb the growing population of any country, and it is only industry which can supply the growing needs of the

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population—both in agriculture and industry.

The need to devote foreign exchange proceeds not to the importation of consumer goods but to the importation of equipment and raw materials for industry, creates problems very similar to those encountered by the use of the agricultural surplus for the building up of heavy industries. There will be shortages, and wages must either remain unspent or they will have to remain temporarily low, if inflation is not to be the means of equating the demand for and supply of consumer goods.

Every socialist country will have to achieve a technical revolution in agriculture. There is no difference between Cuba, the Soviet Union, China or Vietnam. Every socialist country will also have to try and raise the productivity of agriculture and primary production as energetically and as quickly as possible so as to provide the agricultural surplus necessary for the finance of industrialisation. Again there is no difference between Cuba, the Soviet Union or China. I do not think that Professor Kuczynski was correct when he enumerated 'the textile way', the 'iron and steel way' and the 'agricultural way', in describing various ways to socialism. All ways are essentially 'agricultural ways', the question is only whether the surplus produced in the agriculture of a newly liberated and developing country is used for international trade or for domestic investment in heavy industry. And there is undoubtedly an issue.

Let me emphasise once more that the 'internal' finance way and the 'external' finance way, as I have distinguished them above, are not exclusives. Internal and external supply of the goods for industrialisation must be properly mixed. But it is by looking at the extremes that the matter becomes clear to the observer.

It is possible that my own and Professor Kuczynski's views do not diverge too much—but I feel that the need for the absorption of manpower in industry should have been stressed more in Professor Kuczynski's article. As it stands, one might be forgiven if one assumed that the development of agriculture as such was either a novel or a unique feature of the Cuban road to socialism.

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ERGONOMICS—A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT

B. G. Stacey

ALL aspects of our life are increasingly affected by developments in science and technology. Automation, market research, operations research, ergonomics* and cybernetics have all been applied on an increasing scale in the post-war period. Though these terms are frequently used they mean little to most of us. With the exception of automation, one finds virtually no interest in these developments in trade union circles. This is a serious defect considering the importance of science in our lives. The aim of this article is to describe the development of ergonomics, to indicate its range of application and to discuss some of the issues it raises.

Man has always had to adapt himself to his material circumstances and, for much of his existence, has striven to modify his environment for his own benefit. However, it is only in recent centuries that advancing science and technology has enabled him to get a long way in moulding his environment to his needs. Since the industrial revolution the technological and social changes in our society have been rapid. The early stage of industrialisation was marked by crude methods, with attention concentrated on getting the most out of materials, machines and labour, usually without any regard for the impact of such methods on the workers and their families. Most of the capitalists of the period violently resisted all efforts to mitigate the evils associated with industrial capitalism because changes seemed to threaten a reduction of profits.

Since that early industrial stage there have been numerous changes for the better. Many of these have been achieved by pressure from organised labour. Some of this pressure has resulted in legislative measures laying down minimum standards. The advantages of a scientific approach to man's problems have become more widely accepted. The application of scientific findings has made a substantial contribution to the improvement in living and working conditions. The more intelligent employers have come steadily to recognise the advantages of many of these changes and have come to promote some welfare policies themselves.

It is obvious that there are still many problems relating to work,

*In the U.S.A. the terms generally used for this discipline are 'human engineering' and 'human factors engineering'.

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working conditions, transport, health and so on to be solved and ergonomics represents a new application of science to aspects of these problems. Ergonomics carry out research into the capacities and limitations of people to obtain precise information which can be used in designing structures, machines, tools, processes and an environment better adapted to human needs and capacities.

It is the job of engineers, designers, architects and builders to devise, design and produce structures, machines, etc., and they usually give some consideration to human factors, and to the extent that they do this systematically, they are practising ergonomics. But whereas exact information about structures, materials, tolerances, power and capacities of different components is obtained as a matter of routine, they usually rely upon 'common sense' information about human characteristics. This means that we always have many designs which are inefficient, unsafe or unhealthy, *e.g.*, dials, signals and displays which are difficult to perceive; controls difficult to control; excessively noisy environments; and buildings which provide an indoor climate similar to that in greenhouses.

The origins of ergonomics are in the second world war. During the war the armed forces were faced with a series of problems and decided to call upon the help of scientists. Gradually, during the war, two groups of specialists came together—biological* scientists who know about people and their capacities and engineers who know about materials, machines and technical processes. The success of this teamwork resulted in the extended application of ergonomics inside and outside the services.

In the post-war period two further technological developments have promoted ergonomics—automation and air/space travel. Automation has frequently resulted in the construction of equipment which made extreme demands upon the responsible personnel. In consequence, ergonomists have been called upon to collaborate with engineers in the design or modification of equipment.

It can be seen that ergonomics involves the application of the human biological sciences together with the engineering sciences to achieve the optimum mutual adjustment of man-machine systems in safe and healthy conditions. The basic fact which has emerged from the development of ergonomics is that the design of machines, tools and other products according to engineering principles is not enough to ensure that their full potentialities are realised, that their

*The biological sciences involved are anatomy, physiology and psychology. Anthropometry, a term frequently used, is that branch of anatomy which is concerned with the dimensions and muscular operations of the various parts of the body.

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effective and safe operation is within the capacities of their normal human operators, and that the environment in which they are used, or which they create, is satisfactory. The man-machine system is inevitably a single system in which the characteristics of man and machine contribute the performance of the whole system. Full account must therefore be taken of human abilities and limitations in the design of these systems if they are to operate to full advantage safely and with no danger to health. The human characteristics concerned include not only biological characteristics but also the effects of individual and social experience.

It would take too much space to list all the applications of ergonomics. Some of the major current concerns of ergonomists are accidents; improvement of inspection and monitoring; factors influencing fatigue and the effects of fatigue on performance; the arrangement of working periods and the problems of shift work; the work problems of older people and the design of work for the disabled.

It is significant that the original support for ergonomics research and for many of its important applications came from public institutions not primarily activated by the profit motive. This has meant that ergonomics has been applied largely in a socially useful way. Its development has been very different from that of work study where the emphasis has always been on eliminating jobs, speeding up work, cutting costs and increasing profits.

Ergonomists have been primarily concerned with efficiency, safety, health, working conditions, job satisfaction and the problems of particular groups of people. It has always been realised, of course, that the successful application of ergonomics would increase productivity and in the long run, cut costs. But the scientists who originated the discipline were concerned with its practical usefulness not profits. Over the last ten to twelve years ergonomics has increasingly been used by management consultants and specialists in private firms whose interest has primarily been in using it to increase profits.

When we consider the diverse range of activities of ergonomics, we can see that this application of science is of significance to us as workers, as travellers and as consumers. The content of the jobs we do and the conditions we work in will increasingly be influenced by ergonomic findings. Though some ergonomic data has been used in the design of buses and cars, their manufacturers need to use much more before we have vehicles which are reasonably safe and

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which meet the real needs of their users. Considerable research is being done on highway design and traffic signs to improve traffic safety. Ergonomics is increasingly being used in the consumer industries and this will lead to better designed products. Ergonomics certainly needs applying in the building industry. In particular, the design of houses and flats leaves much to be desired.

It seems likely that ergonomics will eventually be introduced into collective bargaining. The ergonomists are dealing with many of the criteria which enter into job analysis, job evaluation, the measurement of skill and the comparison of jobs, all elements of bargaining. This is not to say that these scientists will set out to create a new wage system, but rather that ergonomic findings will be used in the negotiations. If exact techniques are developed or if exact data is obtained which can be related to work and the wages system, then they will certainly be applied. It is likely that employers will be the first to use ergonomic data in negotiations and it will certainly be at a time when the data support their position. Ergonomics will also influence indirectly the income of some groups by contributing to efficiencies which reduce the opportunities for overtime working.

It is probable that some trade unionists will react to this by disbelief or a feeling that ergonomics can be kept out of bargaining by trade union resistance. It should be remembered that the trade unions were unable to stop the use of work study in bargaining even though it is based on shaky evidence and has been frequently used directly against the interests of employees. Moreover, many unionists now co-operate in its application. The fact is that unionists need to know what ergonomics is about. It will then be possible to influence its application so that it is used for and not against, employee interests. Some of the larger unions could well take the initiative and sponsor their own research.

Ergonomists are dealing with problems of importance to trade unions. Their approach is not necessarily the best or the only way to tackle these problems. For example, with regard to accidents it is of paramount importance to see that the Factories Act is really enforced and to obtain further, more stringent safety legislation. But ergonomics does have a good deal to offer in the prevention of accidents and in dealing with other problems. Because of this it is worthwhile attempting to raise interest in the subject.* Further, in discussions within the labour movement, ergonomics raises old questions about the division of labour, the meaning of work, the uses and misuses of science and the sharing of wealth.

*D.S.I.R. has published a series of non-technical booklets called *Ergonomics for Industry*. The series is available free of charge from the Warren Spring Laboratory, Stevenage, Herts., and re accidents they have published a book by R. G. Sell, the ergonomist, called *Ergonomics versus Accidents*.

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LES DAMNÉS DE LA TERRE

Debout les damnés de la terre,
Debout les forçats de la faim.
(The first two lines of Eugene Pottier's original words for the song, *'L'Internationale'*.)

Jack Woddis

FRANTZ FANON, who died in 1961, has already become something of a legend. A young psychiatric worker from Martinique, he threw in his lot with the F.L.N. in the struggle for the liberation of Algeria, but died of leukaemia at the early age of 36, on the very eve of Algeria's victory. His writings have had a considerable influence among educated Africans, and equally, if not more so, among European intellectuals. In Italy, for example, a Frantz Fanon Centre has been established, which holds seminars on Fanon's work and ideas, and issues a regular journal, *Bollettino di Note Informazioni e Documenti*. In France, Fanon's writings have had wide currency, especially his main work, *Les Damnés de la Terre*, which appeared in 1963 with a special foreword by Jean-Paul Sartre. This book has now been published in England under the title, *The Wretched of the Earth*.*

Fanon's life, as shown by this remarkable book, was dominated by a burning hatred of colonial and racial oppression. No one can read a single page of Fanon without sensing the depth of his just feelings. In vivid imagery, writing almost as if his nerve-ends were exposed, he attacks without mercy all those whom he regards as standing in the way of the liberation of the down-trodden millions of Africa. It is doubtful if any writer has ever been able to depict so vividly and with such passion the feelings of an oppressed people in the face of their hated oppressor. Every barbed word against the *colons* of Algeria is equally an exposure of Smith and the white settlers of Rhodesia.

Fanon has many penetrating things to say, too, on the question of national culture and its relation to the national democratic revolution. He writes devastatingly on the weaknesses of the African bourgeoisie, although he tends to lump together, without distinction, the *comprador* and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the feudal landowners, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, the intellectuals and the national bourgeoisie—as if all are equally to be scorned, and all equally to be regarded as props of neo-colonialism.

Fanon, to his credit, tries to analyse class forces in the African

*Published by MacGibbon & Kee Ltd. 36s.

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revolution, but his weakness here is that he relies too easily on superficial impressions gleaned from a few countries, and consequently makes sweeping generalisations which are not borne out by the facts. It is significant that he uses no statistics, nor does he provide concrete details or examples, when making his class analysis. Briefly, his 'theory' on the rôle of classes in Africa is that 'in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary' (p. 48) while 'the proletariat' is that section of the colonised population which has been 'most pampered by the colonial régime' (p. 88), which is 'the most comfortably off fraction of the people' (p. 98), and is therefore incapable of playing any significant rôle in the revolution. In the urban areas, Fanon looks to the 'core of the lumpen proletariat' in whom he expects that 'the rebellion will find its urban spearhead' (p. 103).

Fanon provides no evidence to justify this 'theory'. He rests his case on eloquent argument. If he had bothered to examine the important rôle played by the African working class—their numerous strikes and demonstrations in which hundreds were shot, killed or wounded, and thousands arrested and imprisoned—in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, in Ghana and Nigeria, in Guinea, Mali, Cameroun, Niger, and Senegal, in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, in Sudan and Zambia, in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa—he could never have concocted his 'theory'. In most African territories the peasants—who, after all, are the overwhelming majority of the population—have been the *main support* of the national struggle, but this has always been alongside the struggle of the working class which has been the most politically aware, acted as a pace-maker, and provided cadres and often leadership for the national movement as a whole.

It is important to note that Africa's most advanced national leaders estimate the rôle of the working class quite differenly from Fanon. Speaking of the Guinea trade union and working class movement, Diallo Seydou has said: 'Its rôle at every instant is political'. Mamadou Keita has described the Mali working class as 'a fundamental base' of the party. Kwame Nkrumah has made a similar assessment of the working class of Ghana. Other African leaders have made parallel appraisals.

Fanon's attempt to pose the African worker against the peasant, on the alleged grounds of the better material conditions enjoyed by the former, ignores the peculiarity of the class structure of Africa. The overwhelming majority of African workers have been casual, un-

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skilled migrants, who periodically return to the land to work as peasants. A 'worker-peasant' is a common type, the peasant taking up wage labour in order to help the rest of his peasant family whom he has left behind on the land. His relatively higher wage is not to enrich himself but to assist the whole family. This is confirmed by T. M. Yesufu (*An Introduction to Industrial Relations in Nigeria: 1962*), as well as by the I.L.O. African Advisory Committee report on 'Methods and Principles of Wage Regulations' (Tananarive, April 1962).

It is not without significance that Fanon's attempt to belittle the rôle of the African working class in the struggle for national independence, has been taken up and used by a whole number of bourgeois 'experts' on Africa, especially in the United States (see, for example, the essay by Elliot J. Berg and Jeffrey Butler, in *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa,* 1964). Fanon, no doubt would have been shocked to find his writings being taken up and used by such apologists of capitalism; but life is a harsh teacher, and the logic of Fanon's argument here, whatever his intentions, is to lend support to all those who wish to foster a stunted form of capitalism in Africa, and keep the working class in a subordinate position. Attempts to minimise the rôle of the African working class in the struggle for national liberation are part of the ideological and political struggle to keep the workers out of decisive positions of power and influence in the post-war independence period.

Fanon is correct in drawing to our attention the peculiar and important rôle played in Africa by the young, unemployed and most depressed sections of the urban population. Amilcar Cabral has noted the same phenomenon in Portuguese Guinea. But Fanon goes further; he looks to all 'the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed and petty criminals' (p. 104) to throw themselves 'into the struggle for liberation like stout working men'. This criminal lumpen-proletariat element, however, is a most dangerous and unreliable ally, and is certainly not to be regarded as 'one of the most spontaneous and the most radically revolutionary forces of the colonised people' (p. 103). In fact, Fanon himself is forced to admit (p. 109) that in practice it has been the imperialists who have been able to make frequent use of the lumpen proletariat *against* the national struggle—and he cites here the very relevant examples of Algeria, Angola and Congo (Leopoldville).

Fanon's confusion on many essential points has, unfortunately, resulted in his ideas being taken up and used in a distorted fashion

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by cold war warriors who ignore the main purpose of Fanon's work, and who fail to recognise (or wish to cast aside) the fact that Fanon hated not only colonialism and racialism; he equally detested capitalism, both that of the imperialist oppressor and equally that of his miserable imitator in Africa, for whom Fanon had nothing but the most withering contempt.

Fanon admittedly has a limited understanding of the real nature of the twentieth century. The important rôle played by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in assisting the Algerian people in their liberation struggle has been commented on by Ben Bella, as well as by Col. Boumedienne. The rôle of the socialist world appears to have been outside Fanan's cognisance. Neither does he apparently recognise the long and consistent struggle of the French working people against their own Government's war in Algeria. In view of his failure to make a correct appraisal of the forces making for Algerian liberation, it is not surprising that he fails to appreciate that it is the combination of the socialist world, the national liberation struggle (or 'the Third World', to use his term), and the international working class movement which constitutes the decisive factor of our epoch. It is this combination which guarantees, as Lenin so wisely forecast, that 'the movement of the majority of the world's population, which at first is directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and may play a much greater revolutionary rôle than we expect'. This total conception is increasingly being embraced by Africa's most outstanding leaders.

Those who wish to isolate Africa and Asia from their natural allies have attempted to utilise Fanon's work for this purpose. It is true that Fanon calls on the people of Africa to turn their backs on Europe, but there is no mistaking that it is capitalist Europe to which he really refers:

> Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their score when they withdraw their flags and their police forces from our territories. For centuries the capitalists have behaved in the underdeveloped world like nothing more than war criminals. Deportations, massacres, forced labour, and slavery have been the main methods used by capitalism to increase its wealth, its gold and diamond reserves, and to establish its power. . . . In a very concrete way Europe has stuffed herself inordinately with the gold and raw materials of the colonial countries: Latin America, China and Africa. From all these continents, under whose eyes Europe today raises up her tower of opulence, there has flowed out for centuries towards that same Europe diamonds and oil, silk and cotton, wood and exotic products. Europe is

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literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped countries (pp. 79-81).

Fanon's explanation tends to be oversimplified, and his viewpoint is not always clear. But it is hard to believe that his intention was to isolate Africa from all that is progressive in the rest of the world. He asserts, without equivocation: 'The Cold War must be ended, for it leads nowhere' (p. 83). He calls for a great effort to 'rehabilitate mankind and *make man victorious everywhere*', and adds that this task 'will be carried out with the indispensable help of the European peoples, who themselves must realise that in the past they have often joined the ranks of our *common masters* (my italics; J.W.) where colonial questions were concerned. To achieve this, the European people must first decide to wake up and shake themselves, use their brains, and stop playing the stupid game of the Sleeping Beauty'. No one who was anti-European could have displayed such genuine concern for the real fate and future of Europe.

Fanon died a young man. He was cut off in the midst of his development. He had witnessed the results of appalling tortures and massacres, a glimpse of which we see in that section of the book in which Fanon describes a number of his psychiatric case histories. It would be remarkable if Fanon did not write with bitterness, or develop his ideas with a certain exaggeration. But there was more to his outlook than hatred of oppression and racialism. Was it an accident that for the title of his book he chose the phrase of *'L'Internationale'*, the anthem of the international working class which ends with the words 'L'Internationale serra le genre humain'?

It was the fate of the 'human race' which was really at the core of all Fanon's thinking. And when the political inadequacies of his book have been forgotten, the noble struggle against colonialism to which he devoted his life will still be remembered.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Reckoning, Earl of Avon. Cassell. 622 pp. 42s.
Russia and Germany, Walter Lacquer. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 368 pp. 45s.
It Was Not in the News, Max Cohen. Hargreaves. 222 pp. 21s.
German Social Democracy, Bertrand Russell. Allen & Unwin. 184 pp. 21s.
The German Ideology, Marx & Engels. Lawrence & Wishart. 736 pp. 25s.
Public Sector Pensions, Gerald Rhodes. Allen & Unwin. 320 pp. 42s.
Peacemaking 1919, Harold Nicolson. Methuen. 378 pp. 15s.
The British Labour Party, Carl F. Braud. Oxford University Press. 328 pp. 45s.
Twelve Chairs, Ilf and Petrov. Frederick Muller Ltd. 322 pp. 25s.
Social Policy and Administration. D. V. Donnison and V. Chapman. Allen & Unwin, 266 pp. 30s.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Grand Design
Franz Joseph Strauss
Weidenfeld and Nicolson; 106 pp 18s.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES used the phrase 'liberating the satellites' to describe his dream of restoring capitalism in the countries of Eastern Europe which took the path of socialism after their liberation from fascism. Franz Joseph Strauss nurses the same hopes, under the phrase, 'reunification of the Germans under the protective legal framework of a European Federation'. Mr. Dulles talked of going to the brink of war to achieve his aim; Herr Strauss proclaims that this can be achieved through a London-Bonn-Paris axis, backed by armaments and nuclear power, making a united Europe an equal military partner with the United States in an Atlantic alliance. The first step in this process is to be the entry of Britain into the Common Market and the final stage, 'the break up of the Communist empire from the inside'.

It is not enough to explain the fatuity of Herr Strauss's arguments in the light of the realities of the European situation; the student of European affairs must examine how the arguments in this book are being used to frustrate all hopes of disarmament and relaxation of tension. Strauss makes no secret of his intentions. He describes the theory that the cold war is coming to an end as a 'dangerous assumption'.

'We can no longer' he says, 'live with the situation that presented itself at the end of the second world war when the Americans and the Russians shook hands across the Elbe'. He is prepared to 'abandon' Germany's claim to the territories lost in Hitler's war provided it is taken over as a 'European claim'. He declares that the 'basic rights of our refugees to their traditional homes is much more a European than a German national problem'.

The basis of Strauss's philosophy is expressed in an answer he gives to the question 'why did the Germans not get rid of Hitler themselves?' He answers, 'It is no more intelligent and pertinent a question than asking why the Russians or the Poles or the Czechs or the Hungarians do not free themselves from Communism'. One would have thought that even the blindest anti-communist would at least have included in his analysis some consideration of the economic factors involved in the existence of a socialist sector, and the obvious support it enjoys from the people. Strauss will have none of it. He declares blithely that the final goal must be 'the abolition of the old national boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe'. And he goes on to repeat that he 'is not seeking the restoration of a German national state within its old borders but the reunification of the Germans under the protective legal framework of a European Federation'. *Mein Kampf* could not have put it more clearly.

Against this background, we must ask ourselves how far Western policy is going along with Herr Strauss. It is true he is under attack in his own country, but none of the political parties in the Federal Republic have had the courage to accept the reality that no settlement of the problems of Europe and no move towards reunification can take place except on the basis of two sovereign German states and permanence of the post war frontiers. Mr. Heath would

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clearly take Britain into the Common Market on any terms. Does he accept Herr Strauss's programme?

So far the Labour government has repeated phrases about 'German reunification' in order to appease the Federal Republic and has gone back on Mr. Wilson's pledge to accord a 'measure of recognition' to the Democratic Republic. Mr. Michael Stewart refused to declare in favour of the post war frontiers in Warsaw and made the amazing statement that the people living in Poland's western territories must be asked their opinion. Does he believe that the Poles need to be asked if they wish to live in Poland? If so, he is dangerously near to Herr Strauss's thinking.

This book for all its nonsensical premises should be taken seriously. At best it lays down a formula for permanent tension in Europe. At worst, it is a plan for the third world war. If the Western powers operate, as Herr Strauss demands, on the basis that the Socialist countries are waiting for the chance to revolt and join a capitalist federation of the West, the war danger will mount. The chances of an incident or a provocation will always be with us. And the world should be warned of the consequences. The armies of the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia recently carried out manoeuvres in the G.D.R. to demonstrate the fate that awaits any aggressor.

The alternative is to be found in the policies of disengagement and co-existence, based on disarmament and the safeguarding of mankind from nuclear armaments in the hands of the German generals, to which the labour movement is pledged.

GORDON SCHAFFER.

Nasser's Egypt

Peter Mansfield

Penguin African Library.
222 pp. 4s. 6d.

'No COUNTRY in the world today arouses such strong feelings as Egypt' writes Mr. Mansfield in his foreword to this book. Why this is so is summed up in his concluding chapter. Between 1955 and 1965, Egypt has proved that it is possible for a small nation emerging from centuries of foreign domination to act as an autonomous power in defiance of old imperial and neo-colonial powers. More, it has become 'a pace-setter for social and economic change in the Arab world and even beyond in Africa'.

Mr. Mansfield has a very good knowledge of Egypt and the Middle-East. He first went to Lebanon in 1955 soon after joining the British Foreign Service. He resigned from the Service a year later as a gesture of disapproval of Eden's Suez adventure. For the past four years he has lived in Cairo where he is Middle East Correspondent of the *Sunday Times*.

He has assembled a great deal of factual information on Egyptian affairs, which he now presents in a clear and concise form. He is also presumably familiar with British and American policies, but on this subject he is almost completely silent. He does not examine, let alone criticise, imperialist aims in Egypt and the Arab world. Hence the lack of a real explanation of the motive force of Egypt's national movement and its influence on other newly-independent countries, in otherwise interesting chapters devoted to her relations with Arab countries, African countries, and with the socialist and capitalist camps.

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However, Mr. Mansfield's important contribution is his detailed and easily readable description of Nasser's internal policies and the highlights of Egypt's economic development in the past ten years, with a wealth of information on the state of the economy under the monarchy, the first futile attempts in the early years of the Republic to make the old system work without fundamental changes, then the gradual realisation of the inevitability of the clash between the national interest and the vested interests of foreign capital and its local allies. The book follows Nasser and his advisers on their step by step road to a nationalised economy. They may have lacked a coherent policy, but were driven forward by the crying needs of an economy distorted and impoverished by the stranglehold of foreign capital.

It gives a convincing picture of the present levelling-off of incomes at the top of Egyptian society, of the economic gains achieved by the industrial workers in the towns, and of the few but encouraging moves to improve the conditions of the peasant masses, still living in grinding poverty despite the land reform.

The focus is on the achievements of the past few years, but there are pointed warnings on the twin dangers of corruption and of a new privileged class asserting itself and deriving its privileges from office, rather than from property or the land or financial capital.

This book is a useful contribution to an understanding of the difficult and sometimes devious road by which Egypt has become the focal centre of the nationalist movement in one of the most crucial areas of imperialist interests.

C.W.

Invitation to an Inquest
Walter & Miriam Schneir
Doubleday & Co. Inc., N.Y. 468 pp. $5.95.

HERE IS ONE more book on the trial of the Rosenbergs and Morton Sobell; it is the product of five years of hard work and painstaking investigation, and is certainly not one too many.

Unlike many books into which great labour has been put, it is well written, clear, and readable. The authors have studied not just the case itself but the history of the atom bomb, and—as the at-first-sight odd title implies—now invite the American public to hold an inquest on the terrible trial. I hope that the invitation will be accepted.

The case against the trial is built up quietly; everything is analysed, examined and explained; everything that can be said for the prosecution is there, with everything that can be said for the defence; and in the end we see 'the executions of the Rosenbergs as a deed naked of the justification in which it was clothed', and that 'not only were Julius and Ethel Rosenberg—and Morton Sobell—unjustly convicted, they were punished for a crime that never occurred'.

These conclusions may not surprise those in Britain who studied the verbatim record shortly after the trial and published their conclusions on it, but it will shock millions of Americans who were convinced of the guilt of the accused at the time. (The conclusions of those who wrote on the matter in England are confirmed by the writers of the book, with the advantage of far more material and research than was possible here when I and others were writing about it.)

The story is an important reinforcement of the view that to secure a fair trial in a political case in a

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period of public hysteria is almost impossible; at the time of the trial, American public opinion was not only alarmed by the discovery that the U.S.S.R. could manufacture atom bombs—at a time when it was alleged to be so ignorant of science that it could not do anything of the sort unless its spies had purloined the 'secret' of the atom bomb from the U.S.A.—but had also been driven into hysteria by the outbreak of the Korean War, falsely attributed to 'the wicked Russians' by the very State Department which had in fact started it itself.*

The book does much more than merely to demonstrate the difficulty of trying political cases fairly; it shows what crimes against humanity and common decency the rulers of our 'free world' states are led to commit by anti-Communist and anti-Socialist obsession—how for example their investigating and prosecuting authorities will prepare, coach, and put into the witness-box unscrupulous and unreliable witnesses, how they will forge vital documents to bolster up baseless cases, how they will conduct cases in court with complete lack of scruple as to how they inflame the jury by tendentious Press statements, make false assertions in Court, and generally behave in a way which must horrify anyone with any sense of justice. The full story as it is now before us goes further; it demonstrates that anti-Communist obsession and propaganda have built up in the U.S.A. a fully 'conformist' public opinion, a closed society, and a virtual police state.

Let us in Britain take heed; if we do not check our governments, we shall be led along the same road.

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

*See 'Korea: Dead Myths Revived', *Labour Monthly*, July 1964 (p. 302).

A New Look at Russia
William Mandel
Evans Bros., 248 pp. 25s.

THE AUTHOR of this book is described as 'one of the first professional researchers on Soviet affairs in the United States'. He is the author of two books on the U.S.S.R. and in this, his latest book, he writes interestingly, giving the reader a mass of information on many aspects of Soviet life. He reports on what he has seen and learned on his visits to the Soviet Union without 'taking sides' and passing judgment. He gives the reader a quite comprehensive view of domestic life in the U.S.S.R. and turns from this to tell of the Soviet Union's emergence as one of the great powers. He writes on education, history, agriculture, medicine, the status of women, science and many other subjects. To do all this, means that inevitably each subject is dealt with quite briefly, so that one comes to the end of each chapter wishing that the author could have dealt with the subject matter more fully.

The chapter on East-West points of contact (sport, art and trade) is written for American consumption but is, nevertheless, interesting from our viewpoint. He makes no reference to the need for better understanding and co-operation, but from the way he writes it is not difficult to assess the writer's point of view. He writes as a reporter, not as a protagonist, and throughout the book he reveals himself as a keen observer. It was therefore with some astonishment that I read on p. 89: 'I have never met a Soviet schoolchild who could speak a foreign language . . . and I doubt that reading ability in a foreign language is very advanced'. My personal experience has been completely the opposite. One of the very pleasing

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features of a visit to the Soviet Union is the fact that one can speak to many people, especially children, in English. In Leningrad I had the pleasure of taking, for a short time, a class of seven year olds who were learning English, and they showed a remarkable aptitude together with very inquiring minds, which became evident when I invited them to put questions to me in English.

The book is well illustrated, contains a not too adequate map and a good index. I hope that it will be read by many people, who having read it will, I am sure, feel a desire to read more about the U.S.S.R.

V. CARVELL.

Correspondence:

ON SEAN O'CASEY

ON READING Gabriel Fallon's recent book, *Sean O'Casey: The Man I Knew*, I came across this comment: 'I note that he (O'Casey) has told his latest biographer that he was always a Communist. If he was he managed to conceal the fact from many of his early friends. So far as I was concerned his communism began to thrust itself forward *only towards the end of World War II when it was obvious that the Allies were likely to win and the Russian tanks were now pointing westwards'*.

From this statement (my italics) we gather that O'Casey only backed winners and was too scared to commit himself, politically, until Fascism was well-nigh smashed. It will not be necessary to defend Sean O'Casey's political beliefs before any long-standing readers of *Labour Monthly*, but there may be some point in warning younger readers against the distortions evident in this book.

This is a damnably unfair misrepresentation and the only support for it is that the playwright did not discuss these things with Fallon. Instead, however, he openly declared his support for communism and the Soviet Union, publicly, and in word and deed. O'Casey joined the editorial board of the *Daily Worker* at the beginning of the war and contributed many articles and letters to the paper throughout the war and during those post-war years when anti-Soviet feeling was strongest in the West. When the *Daily Worker* was banned in 1940-41, O'Casey was prominent in the agitation against the Government's decision—see, for example, his letter to the *New Statesman* (August 2, 1941). But the evidence for O'Casey's enduring courage and faith politically, is manifest in so many ways that it is incredible to find Fallon's opinion printed in all seriousness in 1965. But there it is, and in all the reviews (English and Irish) I have yet to read a contradiction of this distortion or of the many other misrepresentations elsewhere in the book.

Ronald Ayling,
Bristol.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO FREEDOM

THE craven attitude of the British Government in dealing with the racialist rabble now in power in Rhodesia has appalled even the most moderate opinion here. Half-hearted sanctions and avuncular finger-wagging are hardly calculated to cause the Smith régime any heart-burning, or force them to change their policy. That this is plainly understood is shown by the mood of many letters we have received.

'Your Notes on Rhodesia last month were like a breath of sanity', writes a Yorkshire reader. 'The dirty dealing behind the present situation must be rammed home—kid-glove methods aren't adequate in dealing with dangerous animals!' An African student here has gained new readers with the Notes on Rhodesia. 'I was proud to show this issue of *L.M.* to my fellow-students', he tells us. 'The struggle in Rhodesia is indeed the struggle of all supporters of freedom against racialism—the more articles like this, the more people can be roused.'

A Rhodesian living in this country writes: 'The points made in *L.M.* comparing the appeasement of Nazi Germany to the present treatment of the Smith set-up are very apt ones. Only constant pressure from progressives everywhere can ensure justice for the *real* Rhodesian people.'

The many friends whose regular donations and extra Christmas and New Year Gifts form the financial foundations of *L.M.* will be heartened by the fact that their help has considerably contributed towards achieving these aims.

Helen Falber.

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